

Slough Town 0, Wycombe Wanderers 3

THE long awaited Berks and Bucks Senior Cup quarter-final between Slough and Wycombe Wanderers was finally played after two postponements on Saturday. And inevitably, the match proved an anti-climax in more ways than one (writes **Stuart Earp**).

The first disappointment was the game itself. On a difficult pitch which had taken a fierce battering from the rain in the last two weeks, neither side played at their best and there were far too many niggling fouls throughout the 90 minutes.

The second disappointment was the outcome. I'm sure many people regarded Saturday's match as the actual final and the winners are now, on paper at least, virtually assured of the County Cup. Wanderers will meet little Aylesbury Works team Rivet Sports in the semi-final at Aylesbury F.C. next Saturday (2.30 K.O.) and barring any mishaps, they look certain to retain the trophy they have won for the last two years.

Bearing in mind the convincing look of a 3-0 scoreline, it may seem harsh to criticise Wycombe. They were undoubtedly the better side on the day — but the match itself could have pleased very few people. Much of the responsibility must lie with referee Potter, who allowed the players far too much lee-way. As a result, the match was ruined by a series of fouls — both sides being guilty.

Wanderers may claim the pitch marred their football but they were rarely convincing and it took two late goals — including a free gift — to finally settle the issue.

Wycombe kept the side that won at Woking on Tuesday with Dylan Evans taking over as sub. from Dave Bullock. One of the main queries about Saturday's game was going to be the pitch. And as soon as the players started warming up, the tacky surface began to deteriorate. A good deal of work must have gone into the preparation of the ground at Wexham Park, but Slough are going to struggle on this type of surface this season.

Considering the worst place on the field was the centre, it was somewhat surprising to see Slough pumping hopeful balls up the

middle for Geoff Anthony and Dave Kemp to chase. It was not until the second half that they looked dangerous by stretching their game wider and in the early stages, they gave Wycombe very little trouble.

Kemp, who left and re-joined the Rebels in the space of three days earlier in the week, slung over one dangerous cross but the best forward on the pitch was Steve Perrin. Showing excellent control in difficult conditions, it was Steve who put the Blues one up in the 17th minute. Keith Searle beat Dave Edwards to the ball and nudged it on for Perrin to crack in a shot. Peter Spittle, one of several players facing their old clubs, was caught going the wrong way as the ball was deflected into the net. Seconds later, Spittle went down late to gather another Perrin effort.

With the confidence of that early goal, Wycombe improved considerably. Thanks to the experience of Terry Reardon, they held a firm grip in midfield and built their attacks from there, with nicely judged passes. Reardon completely overshadowed young Gary Borthwick and it was this confrontation that ensured Wycombe's supremacy.

Slough, in fact, made too many basic errors to seriously threaten their opponents. Passes went astray, even free kicks went out of play and although they came back towards the end of the first half, a complete change of tactics were necessary to test Wycombe.

Their best football came in the early stages of the second half. Racing into attack from the kick-off they gave John Maskell his first moment of anxiety when Tim Smith drove powerfully towards the net. Maskell did well to parry the shot and then gather safely.

Edwards and Smith both went close soon afterwards and in the 64th minute Turl's well struck free kick bounced straight out of Maskell's hands towards Terry Brown. The goalkeeper made amends, however, by diving head first amongst the flying boots to gather the ball again.

Wanderers, at this stage, could muster little in reply. Trying for breakaways, their long passes were comfortably dealt with by centre backs Edwards and John Beyer, who slipped the ball back to Spittle at the first sign of danger. These two had looked extremely confident and therefore it was something of a surprise when Perrin scored his second goal with 83 minutes gone.

Full back Turl began the goal with a badly misplaced pass to Reardon 15 yards inside the home half. Taking the ball forward, he

slipped a perfectly timed pass through the centre backs for Perrin to run onto. As Spittle came out, Steve coolly slotted the ball home with the minimum amount of fuss — a perfectly taken goal.

That was the end for Slough, two goals were too much for them to pull back. Their two chief dangermen, Geoff Anthony and Kemp, were both unable to make any impression in the tacky conditions and with those guns "spiked," Slough had nothing to offer.

The third goal only added insult to injury. Howard Kennedy, who, like Dave Alexander, had a quiet game in midfield, took the ball to the edge of the Rebels penalty box before lining himself up for a shot. He only half connected, however, and as the ball rolled towards Spittle, it seemed a mere formality to save. The 'keeper, however, allowed it to slip out of his hands and under his body. Searle accepted the gift with thanks, thumping it into the roof of the net.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, G. Hand, D. Alexander, T. Reardon, H. Kennedy, A. Horseman (sub. D. Evans 77 mins.), K. Searle, S. Perrin.

SLOUGH: P. Spittle, T. Turl, J. Beyer, D. Edwards, R. Underwood, T. Smith, G. Borthwick (sub. R. Wilkes 56 mins.), D. Malley, D. Kemp, T. Brown, G. Anthony. **Referee:** D. Potter (Twyford).

Half time: 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Perrin 2 (17), (83), Searle (88).